

Chapter 2

Iowa Transit Agencies

Iowa has 35 designated transit systems. Sixteen of these are rural systems and nineteen are urban. Within each region or urban area, local officials must designate a single agency to be responsible for the administration and provision of transit services to the general public. [Chapter 324A](#) of the [Iowa Code](#) defines transit systems.

Designation of a Single Administrative Agency

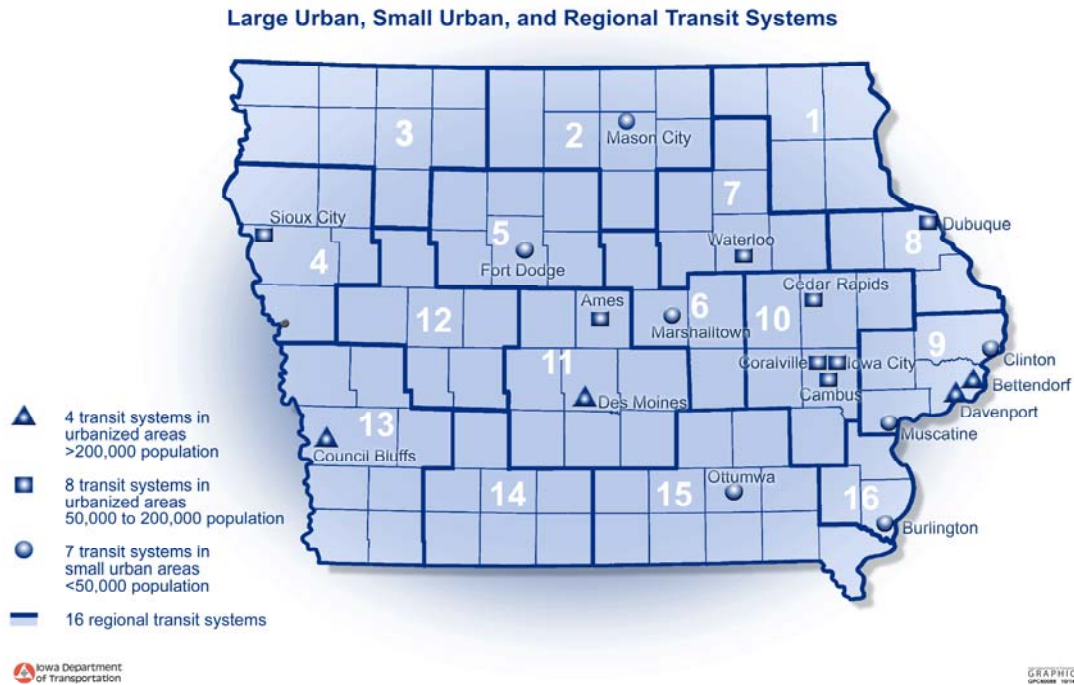
The Iowa DOT may only distribute state and federal public transit assistance to public transit systems that have been duly designated as a single administrative agency (transit system). [Chapter 324A](#) of the [Iowa Code](#) mandates that transportation services be coordinated and defines transit systems.

Within each urban area or region, local officials must designate a single agency to be responsible for the administration and provision of transit services to the general public. The only entities that may receive public transit assistance administered by the Office of Public Transit (OPT) are the designated urban and regional transit systems. In no instance shall an individual county be funded directly. A city must have a population of at least 20,000 or be part of an urbanized area before it can be designated a transit system and be funded directly.

At least one public transit system is designated to serve every area of the state. Agencies other than a designated transit system may receive state or federal transit assistance funding only through pass-through agreements with a designated system. These agreements must entail coordination with the transit agency's direct services and services that are provided under other subcontracts the transit system may have with other providers. Please see [Chapter 8](#) for more information on subcontracts.

Any county may elect to designate the local urban transit system as its single administrative agency and may then become eligible to share the state or federal assistance received by that urban transit program.

The State of Iowa requires coordination of publicly funded passenger transportation services to maximize benefits from limited resources. Accordingly, all agencies providing transportation services need to coordinate services through urban or regional transit systems designated by local officials. The designated transit systems may purchase service from other transportation providers. Click [here](#) for a list of sub-providers operating under the authority of a particular transit system.



The service area of each of Iowa's sixteen regional transit systems includes multiple counties as shown above. Service is provided within each of Iowa's ninety-nine counties as well as between counties and between regions. These regional systems are organized in various ways. Some are public agencies, while others are private-non profit entities. Some of the agencies are part of another agency and others are free-standing. Brokered Systems are those transit systems that provide no direct service, but contract with subproviders to operate transit services. Brokered Systems are responsible for all services and compliance of all operators.

Organization of Iowa's Designated Rural and Small Urban Transit Systems

Transit System and Service Area	Public Agencies	Private Nonprofit Organizations	Free-Standing	Part of Planning Agency	Social Agency (community action, aging)	Brokered Systems
Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation (Region 1) Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek counties		Y			Y	
North Iowa Area Council of Governments (Region 2) Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Kossuth, Mitchell, Winnebago, and Worth counties	Y			Y		Y
Regional Transit Authority/RIDES (Region 3) Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola, Palo Alto, and Sioux counties		Y	Y			
Siouxland Regional Transit System (Region 4) Cherokee, Ida, Monona, Plymouth, and Woodbury counties and Southern Union County, South Dakota		Y	Y			
Mid-Iowa Development Association (Region 5) Calhoun, Hamilton, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Webster and Wright counties	Y			Y		
Region Six Planning Commission/PeopleRides (Region 6) Hardin, Marshall, Poweshiek, and Tama counties	Y			Y		
Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments/Regional Transit Commission (Region 7) Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, and Grundy counties	Y			Y		
Delaware, Dubuque & Jackson County Regional Transit Authority (Region 8) Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson counties	Y			Y		
River Bend Transit (Region 9) Cedar, Clinton, Muscatine, Scott counties and the Illinois Quad City area		Y	Y			
East Central Iowa Transit (Region 9) Benton, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington counties	Y			Y		Y
Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (Region 11) Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Story, and Warren counties	Y		Y			Y
Region XII Council of Governments/Western Iowa Transit System (Region 12) Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie, and Sac counties	Y			Y		
Southwest Iowa Planning Council/Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (Region 13) Cass, Fremont, Harrison, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Pottawattamie and Shelby counties	Y			Y		
Southern Iowa Trolley (Region 14) Adair, Adams, Clarke, Decatur, Ringgold, Taylor, and Union counties		Y			Y	
10-15 Regional Transit Agency (Region 15) Appanoose, Davis, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Lucas, Mahaska, Monroe, Van Buren, Wapello, and Wayne counties	Y		Y			
Southern Iowa Regional Planning Commission/SEIBUS (Region 16) Des Moines, Henry, and Louisa counties		Y			Y	

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) categorizes urban systems by population of the city. Iowa has seven small urban transit systems in cities with population under 50,000; eight large urban transit systems in cities with a population between 50,000 and 200,000; and four large urban systems in metropolitan areas greater than 200,000 population. The size of the city effects how transit funds are distributed and is explained in [Chapter 3](#).

Iowa's Designated Urban Transit Systems		
Small Urban Population under 50,000	Large Urban Population 50,000 - 200,000	Larger Urban Population over 200,000
Burlington	Ames	Bettendorf
Clinton	Cedar Rapids	Council Bluffs
Fort Dodge	Coralville	Davenport
Marshalltown	Dubuque	Des Moines
Mason City	Iowa City	
Muscatine	Sioux City	
Ottumwa	University of Iowa (Cambus)	
	Waterloo	

Most urban transit systems are a city department. The exceptions are the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Black Hawk County, based in Waterloo, which is an intergovernmental agency formed by the cities of Waterloo and Cedar Falls under Chapter 28E of the Code of Iowa, Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) which serves all of Polk County as well as communities that are at least partially within Dallas, Madison and Warren counties and Cambus, which is operated by the University of Iowa.

Transit System Responsibilities

Provision of Public Transit Services – Transit systems receiving federal or state funds are required to provide transportation for the general public. Client transportation may also be provided with these funds if the service is open to the general public. All services must meet accessibility requirements.

Each transit system must provide complete information about the availability of its service to the general public. FTA requires that each transit system provide information on routes or service areas and make it available to the public at all times. Any brochure, publication, or other printed information regarding a transit agency's service area or schedule must state that the service is open to the general public. The general public must also be provided information on the general public fare. General public fares must reflect the benefit of state and federal subsidies. All system information must be available in accessible formats.

Incidental transportation activities such as charters (meeting the FTA standards) (See [Chapter 15](#)), sightseeing services, parcel delivery, meal delivery, or nonpublic client transportation are allowed as long as the use of any equipment for these purposes does not exceed 20 percent of the total use. This service should be identified, reported separately, and documented that it is fully supported with non-federal or non-state transit funds.

Coordination - Manager's of each transit system should coordinate their service to meet the transportation needs of human service agencies in their area. When an agency asks for service (other than charter service), the transit system should make every effort to provide service if vehicles and funds are available. The cost of this service should reflect subsidized state and federal funds when possible. [Chapter 15](#) discusses the coordination mandated in [Chapter 324A](#) of [The Code of Iowa](#).

Equitable Distribution of Transit Assistance - State and federal transit funds are to be fairly distributed among all the services a transit system provides. The benefit of state and federal transit assistance should be considered when calculating all fares. Although the allocation of the distribution is a local decision, OPT may review and comment. Information on internal distribution of funds by each of Iowa's transit systems is public information and is subject to public scrutiny.

Insurance - Transit systems are required to carry \$1,000,000 liability insurance on each vehicle. Transit systems are responsible for verifying that coverage is adequate for the use being made of each vehicle. Each transit system is strongly encouraged to carry \$1,000,000 liability for underinsured/uninsured motorist. A transit system/provider that is a governmental agency that can levy taxes or can show sufficient financial reserves can be self-insured. Insurance requirements are explained in [Chapter 11](#).

Maintenance - Federal and state-funded vehicles must be adequately maintained and any accident damage must be repaired. Vehicle maintenance is covered in [Chapter 10](#). Federal and state-funded facilities must also be adequately maintained. Each asset funded with federal or state assistance by a transit agency must be listed on that agency's asset inventory. Plans for maintenance of each owned asset over the course of its useful life is required. At a minimum, an annual review of whether each asset is being used and maintained in accordance with the plan is also required.

Compliance with state and federal requirements - Transit systems must comply with all applicable federal and state regulations. See information supplied at the end of this chapter for state regulations and the Master Agreement for FTA requirements.

Contracted Service Providers – If a designated transit system chooses to subcontract services from other entities, those other entities must also comply with the state and federal requirements. The designated transit system is responsible for overseeing the operations and assuring compliance of its sub-providers. To ensure that sub-providers are in compliance, requirements must be clearly stated in the contracts with providers. [Chapter 8](#) lists elements that need to be included when subcontracting service.

Withdrawing Designation/Re-designation Procedures

If a county elects to withdraw from participating in a region's public transit program, it may designate another region as its single administrative agency if all three of the following conditions are met:

1. The new region's area adjoins the county;
2. A majority of the counties participating in the public transit program of the adjoining region agree to accept the county as a participant in their program; and
3. The Iowa DOT concurs in a county's designation of a single administrative agency that has already been duly designated by a contiguous region.

If an agency designated as the regional transit system no longer wishes to serve this function, or if the counties involved feel the agency is not performing its role adequately, the counties may choose to designate a new transit agency.

Iowa DOT policy requires the federal share of all vehicles and any other federally funded equipment be transferred to a newly designated regional system to be used for the original public transportation purpose. Iowa DOT policy does not require any buyout of the local share; however, a buyout is normally a locally-negotiated issue. In the past, agreements have ranged from a complete local share transfer to complete buyout of the local share by the new agency.

Any program surplus dollars reserved for a specified transit purpose, such as designated transit capital replacement funds, are expected to transfer. The transfer of transit funds generated as an inadvertent result of differences in contracted service rates and actual costs would be negotiated between the transferring parties. The transfer of any remaining transit funds received from local governments and agencies is also negotiated between the newly designated agency and the former agency. The counties involved will resolve any conflicts or concerns of local share. Transit service contracts should state how surplus funds are handled.

State Compliance Requirements

(State Transit Assistance and Amoco Loan Funding Only)

All services funded with State funds shall be open to the general public.

All services funded with State funds shall be advertised.

All procurement(s) or construction(s) funded with state funds shall be subject to the following procedural guidance listed for State funds and subject to oversight:

- i. [Appendix E, chapters 910, 920, and 921](#)
- ii. [Appendices F, N, S, T, U, and W](#)

Bid specifications for projects over \$25,000 must be submitted to the Iowa DOT for approval.

Any property purchased and/or any land on which facilities are to be constructed upon with State funds shall be free of all legal encumbrance and a legal description of the designated tract of land shall be on file with the transit agency.

The transit system agrees that any property purchased or any facility constructed with State funds shall be used for the provision of public passenger transportation service within the area described in the application for the useful life of the property/facility as determined by the Iowa DOT.

The transit system shall maintain all property purchased or constructed at a high level of cleanliness, safety and mechanical soundness. The cost of such maintenance shall be the full responsibility of the transit system. The Iowa DOT shall have the right to conduct periodic inspection for the purpose of confirming proper maintenance of such property.

If the property is not continuously used for public passenger transportation in a manner similar to that intended by the application, the transit system shall immediately notify the Iowa DOT.

Any revenue generated by interest payments on advance funds received by the AGENCY shall be credited to the PROJECT or repaid to the Iowa DOT.

Add Property Inventory forms must be submitted within 45 days of acceptance of FTA or state funded equipment that cost \$5,000 or more. Items of lesser cost must be added to each agencies asset inventory and assigned an identification number.

Asset/Property Disposition Reports must be submitted within 45 days after any federally funded vehicle, equipment, or facility has been disposed.

The transit system shall secure an audit which shall include an identification of the fully-allocated costs of the public transit program and list all sources of funding which contributed to the support of these costs (State funds and FTA funds received for transit operation, capital or planning activities by individual contract).

All records applicable to any project funded with STA or Amoco Loan funds must be retained and available to the Iowa DOT for a period of three (3) years after the issuance of the audit report following close-out of the joint participation agreement that funded purchase of some asset or provision of a transit service.

Quarterly Statistical Report shall be submitted each quarter, along with a year-end report (due within 45 days from the end of each quarter),

Quarterly Fuel Tax Reports shall be submitted each quarter (filed within 30 calendar days of the end of the reporting quarter), and

Year-end Odometer Readings shall be submitted at the end of the state fiscal year (due 45 days from end of state fiscal year).

Commercial Automobile Liability - combined single limit \$1,000,000.

An STA formula projection must be included in at least the first year of the local area TIP and Iowa STIP.

Passenger Transportation Development Plans (due April 1 of each year)

Consolidated Funding Applications (due May 1 each year)

Federal Compliance Requirements

[Third Party Contracting Requirements, FTA Circular 4220.1E](#)

[Buy America](#)

[Pre-Award and Post-Delivery Audits of Rolling Stock Purchases, 49 CFR 663](#)

[Guidance on Buy America Requirements of the Pre-Award and Post-Delivery](#)

[Bus Testing, 49 CFR 665](#)

[Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefitting from Federal Financial Assistance, 49 CFR 27](#)

[Transportation Services for Individuals With Disabilities, 49 CFR 37](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) Accessibility Specifications for Transportation Vehicles, 49 CFR 38, Subpart B](#)

Contract Provisions Required by [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#)

Arrangement Pursuant to Section 13(c) of the Federal Transit Act [Protecting Workers Represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union \(.PDF\)](#) (844K) for Statewide Capital Projects (5309);

[Special Section 13\(c\) Warranty](#) for Application to the Small Urban and Rural Program (5311)

Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug Testing Programs, [49 CFR 40](#);

Prevention of Prohibited Drug Use and Alcohol Misuse in Transit Operations, [49 CFR 655](#);

Amendment to Definition of "Substance Abuse Professional," [61 FR 9969](#);
[Definition of a SAP under 49 CFR Part 40 \[revised as of October 1, 2002\]](#)

Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug and Alcohol Testing Programs; Insufficient Specimens and Other Issues, [61 FR 37693](#);

Amendments to Opiate Threshold Levels, [63 FR 65128](#);

Prevention of Prohibited Drug Use in Transit Operations: Prevention of Alcohol Misuse in Transit Operations, [63 FR 67612](#);

Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, [23 CFR 771](#)

Participation by Disadvantaged Business Enterprises in Department of Transportation Programs; Final Rule, [64 FR 5095](#)

[Disadvantage Business Enterprise Program](#)

Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments, [OMB Circular A-87](#)

Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, [49 CFR 18](#)

Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profit Organizations, Final Revision to OMB Circular A-110, 58 FR 62992

[Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996, Public Law 104-156](#)

Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations, [OMB Circular A-133](#)

Submit NTD data yearly to either FTA or Iowa DOT (required for Year-end Statistical Report submittals)

Submit JARC data yearly to either FTA or Iowa DOT

Chapter 2 Highlights

- 35 Designated Transit Systems
- four large urban systems in metropolitan areas greater than 200,000 population
- eight large urban transit systems in cities with a population between 50,000 and 200,000
- seven small urban transit systems in cities with population under 50,000
- sixteen regional transit systems serve each of Iowa's ninety-nine counties
- Chapter 342A of the Iowa Code
- within each urban area or region, local officials must designate a single agency to be responsible for the administration and provision of transit services to the general public
- in order to receive state or federal funding, services must be open to the general public
- complete information about the availability of the service must be provided to the general public
- incidental transportation activities can not exceed 20 percent of the total use of the fleet
- services should be coordinated to meet the transportation needs of agencies in the service area
- \$1,000,000 liability insurance is required on each transit vehicle
- IDOT strongly encourages \$1,000,000 liability for underinsured/uninsured motorists.
- state and federally funded equipment or facilities must be adequately maintained.
- responsible for overseeing subproviders and assuring they are in compliance with all federal and state regulations.
- State Compliance Requirements
- Federal Compliance requirements